DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 292 385 HE 021 249

AUTHOR Grace, Judy Diane
TITLE Role Orientation Shifts for Higher Education Graduate Students: The Wisdom of Educational Leave for Community College Practitioners. ASHE Annual Meeting Paper.
PUB DATE Nov 87
NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (Baltimore, MD, November 21-24, 1987).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS College Faculty; *Community Colleges; *Faculty College Relationship; *Graduate Students; Higher Education; Postsecondary Education as a Field of Study; Professional Associations; *Role Perception; *Socialization; *Teacher Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS *ASHE Annual Meeting

ABSTRACT

Role orientation of 14 community college practitioners who are also advanced graduate students in Higher Education Administration programs is considered. The orientations were placed along a continuum, one extreme describing a "local" orientation, identifying with the values and norms of the employing institution. The other extreme described a "cosmopolitan" orientation, identifying with groups outside the employing institution. Six of the graduate students came from several programs, while eight came from the same graduate program. Students in both groups tended to cluster toward the cosmopolitan end of the continuum of role identification. Fifty percent were placed toward cosmopolitan identity, 16.7% toward local identity, and 33.3% were of mixed orientation. The student-practitioners experienced a shift in role orientation from identifying with the employing institution to that of a group outside the institution, in this case, the role of expert developed through the graduate school experience and through exposure to an outside group of professionals. Twenty-six references are cited. (SW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED292385

ROLE ORIENTATION SHIFTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION GRADUATE STUDENTS: THE WISDOM OF EDUCATIONAL LEAVE FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRACTITIONERS

Presented at the Annual Meeting of the
Association for the Study of Higher Education
Baltimore, Maryland
November 20-24, 1987

Judy Diane Grace
Assistant Professor
Higher Education Section
Iowa State University
N232A Lagomarcino Hall
Ames, Iowa 50011
515-294-9628

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Judy Diane Grace

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

HE 021 249

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Abstract

Role Orientation Shifts for Higher Education Graduate Students: The Wisdom of Educational Leave for Community College Practitioners

Role orientation of community college practitioners who are also advanced graduate students in Higher Education Administration programs are described by placement along a continuum, one extreme describing a "local" orientation, identifying with the values and norms of the employing institution, and the other extreme describing a "cosmopolitan" orientation, identifying with groups outside the employing orientation. The implications of this naturalistic study are discussed vis-a-vis graduate training and sponsoring institutions.

Biographical Sketch

Judy Diane Grace is an Assistant Professor of Higher Education at Iowa State University. She worked in the community college system in Virginia for twelve years and now serves as consultant to the community colleges in Iowa and Nebraska through the College of Education at Iowa State.

ASHE

ASSOCIATION
FOR THE
STUDY OF
HIGHER EDUCATION

Texas A&M University
Department of Educational
Administration
College Station, TX 77843
(409) 845-0393

This paper was presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education held at the Sheraton Inner Harbor Hotel in Baltimore, Maryland, November 21-24, 1987. This paper was reviewed by ASHE and was judged to be of high quality and of interest to others concerned with the research of higher education. It has therefore been selected to be included in the ERIC collection of ASHE conference papers.

Role Orientation Shifts for Higher Education Graduate Students:
The Wisdom of Educational Leave for Community College Practitioners

Like all organizations, community colleges need expert knowledge to function (Etzioni 1961). To the extent that community colleges are unique institutions, the expertise of the administrative leadership and teaching faculty needs also to be unique and specific to the college environment. This expertise is frequently gained in two ways: 1) administrators are educated specifically to lead the two-year college, or 2) staff and faculty become involved in the development of leadership skills through programs of professional leave. Some leave programs are for specific subject expertise, others for graduate degree programs in community college or higher education administration. However, several factors complicate these two means for enhancing the organization's expertise.

The Problems

For community college faculty and staff who become involved in graduate degree programs, several factors mitigate against successful participation in the worlds of work and scholarship. Time demands and access to graduate education, whether it be delivered through one course or a degree program, can cause hardship for the student-practitioner. The scheduling of graduate classes and the enforcement of residency requirements for degree programs can cause difficulty for many: community college leave policies vary, and some student/practitioners must take personal or annual leave in order to fulfill the course

or/and residency requirements of graduate degree programs; family, children, and the personal financial situations often confound the problems student/practitioners confront in graduate study.

Community colleges may offer educational leave as part of the professional development process. Such leave may also constitute part of an institutional effort to develop the knowledge and expertise to manage effectively the organization. Careerism, loyalty to one's institution, and professionalism, loyalty to one's profession, often seems at odds for the student/practitioner. Both institution and profession compete for student-practitioner's loyalty. According to Weber (1947), management of a modern organization means a conflict of authorities: the latent authority of administrative office and the authority generated from professional expertise (Gouldner 1957). Divisions between administrative and professional authority, and between institutional and professional loyalty, are sources of conflict in the modern organization (Etzioni 1961) and in the community college practitioner-student.

The conflict between administrative expertise and expertise based authority is manifest in faculty who are in graduate Higher Education Administration programs and are gaining leadership expertise as a result of their graduate experience. The college faculty examined by Wilensky (1964) who rated high on professionalism also rated low on commitment to careerism and therefore to the institution. Ladd and Lipset (1976) found that the lowest status teaching faculty members were those most committed to the college. Yet, professionalism is often defined by an individual's involvement with a specific group of experts, a group apart from other workers. One distinguishing characteristic of an expert is her/his identification with groups outside the institution

(Gouldner 1957), with groups of other experts who are perceived to possess similar expertise. This identification of the student-practitioner may conflict with the administrative authority, priorities, and loyalty expected by the community college sponsoring the individual's study leave.

Membership in a profession involves long periods of training to acquire skills and knowledge needed to carry out that profession's work tasks. Additionally, this training period typically involves the adoption of a particular set of values, norms, and behaviors associated with the profession the student seeks to enter. As the student-practitioner learns the specific behaviors, values, norms, and attitudes of the professional community or group, she/he becomes enculturated to that group (Pavalko 1971). Enculturation assumes that students and professors are part of a community, sharing the same goals (Hosticke 1979) and is an intrinsic part of graduate training. Community college practitioners who re-enter graduate school to develop administrative expertise form liaisons with the professors of the graduate program. The values and norms of professors are not necessarily compatible with those of the community college leaders. It is often during this enculturation in graduate studies that the student-practitioner makes a specific selection and commitment to a profession (administration, teaching faculty, or higher education graduate research and instruction) (Wright 1967). The adoption of these characteristics has also been labeled the acquiring of latent roles (Gouldner 1957). The characteristics of the latent role the student-practitioner acquires may conflict with the individual's manifest role at the community college.

This study examines graduate student-practitioner roles, guided by the conceptual distinction of manifest and latent roles. Community college practitioners who are in graduate programs have manifest roles, as employees in the two-year college. These roles are further complicated because they are professional ones. Professional roles incorporate characteristics that distinguish the responsibilities and rights inherent to a profession from those of an occupation. The manifest role of expert (faculty or administrator) in a specific community college hierarchy may conflict with the developing latent role of expert being developed through graduate study. The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which student/practitioners in graduate programs in Higher Education Administration experience conflict between their latent and manifest roles.

The Value of Studying Work Roles

Sociologists study work settings, primarily because of the amount of time humans spend in them. The role of work in society has changed dramatically since the industrial revolution, changing with it the character of human identity and opening new dimensions of work tasks. Other sociologists have focused their attention on activities and roles outside work. The role of human as worker is studied in relationship to various potentially conflicting roles. Certain studies have found that how well the employee fits a given role helps determine whether that employee will stay in that work role (Rohler 1973, Ouchi 1981). The match between worker and work roles also collectively defines organizational identity. This identity is often advanced by management. To belong to the organization, a worker must demonstrate an acceptance of that identity (Gregory 1983). Groups who survive and succeed in an organization take the culture of

that organization as the central focus of their organizational identity (Van Maanen and Schein 1972). In graduate education, the acceptance of the norms and values of the professoriate is often the prime key to successful attainment of the advanced degree. In this study, the role of worker and worker identity is germane to long term professional, career development as well as institutional/organizational development.

Prior research has identified many types of problems and areas role conflict among professionals in organizations (Reissman 1949, Gouldner 1958, Corwin 1961, Wilensky 1964). Among those areas of conflict noted in these studies, four areas are used in this study of the enculturation of community college practitioners in graduate school: 1) the professional's resistance to organizational rules, 2) the professional's resistance to supervision, 3) the resistance on the part of the professional to standards of the organization, and 4) the professional's conditional loyalty to the organization (Scott 1966). Professions place a premium on autonomy while organizations demand adherence to rules, regulations, and procedures. The impetus for work is internal for the professional; for the organization, work is located in goals, rules, and procedures. Movement of student identity from bureaucratic model to professional, from practitioner to professoriate, causes role conflict. A general conclusion of these studies is that an individual resolves these four areas of potential conflict along a continuum of identity. One end of the continuum is individual identification with the employing organization; at the other end is identification and loyalty to a group outside the organization. The purpose of the present study is to describe community college practitioner-Higher Education graduate student in terms of this continuum.

Although graduate student/practitioners have loyalty and identity to both the employing community college and the graduate education program, there is a conflict between the values, norms, and expected behavior within the two organizations (Wilkins 1979). Bland (1979) evaluated performance among community college faculty and found a conflict between professional and organizational orientations. Becker and Carr (1956) proposed investment of student resources in graduate training as a variable to the degree of professional commitment. The amount of money, time, dislocation, etc. correlated highly with orientation outside the institution. Thus, it may be hypothesize: the greater the degree of professionalization resulting from the graduate program, the greater the degree of role conflict. Furthermore, the greater the degree of professionalization, the greater the degree of perceived conflict with the employing organization.

The Continuum of Roles

Although several continua have been utilized to describe the phenomenon of role conflict, Gouldner's (1957) was selected for this study. Gouldner studied faculty at liberal arts colleges in order to distinguish between their manifest role in the organization and their latent professional role as expert. On one end of his continuum were "locals," signifying individuals who identified with the values and norms of the employing organization; at the opposing end of Gouldner's continuum were "cosmopolitans," or those individuals identifying with the values and norms of a reference group outside the organization. In the situation examined by this study, the professor of community college or Higher Education serves as the professional expert, the referent for the cosmopolitans, while the employing institution serves as referent for the locals' identity. Locals tend to be characterized by high organizational loyalty, low commitment

to a specialized role skills, and an orientation toward a reference group located within the organization. Cosmos are generally less likely to accept organizational rules, are oriented toward the development within their speciality, and are oriented toward a group outside their colleges.

Sources and Treatment of the Data

Two groups of graduate students in Higher Education Administration were surveyed. One group (n=6) was heterogeneous, coming from several programs, and the other group (n=8) was homogeneous, coming from the same graduate program. The first group was representative of typical Higher Education Administration students: they were student-practitioner representatives to the Council of Universities and Colleges (CUC), meeting at an American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC) conference. Students in the second group were also representative of such graduate programs determined by their profile drawn in comparison to a previous study of these programs (Grace and Fife 1986). Students in both groups were given a modified version of a questionnaire developed to describe orientation of faculty toward local or cosmopolitan identity (Gouldner 1957). Additionally, student-practitioners were asked to provide some demographic information.

The questionnaire was validated with the heterogeneous group by means of a participant observer technique. As part of a panel presentation on graduate student development held at AACJC, students in this first group responded to open-ended questions leading to a description of role orientation. Responses were recorded verbatim and compared with responses on the questionnaire.

Comparison was made on items of ordering of roles (personal, occupational, student, and professional), on progress in graduate program ("in coursework," "finished coursework," "writing"), number of years at employing institution, and goals immediately following completion of graduate program. Comparisons were used to classify students according to primary role identification.

Both groups' responses to the questionnaire were summarized to describe frequency of response to items identifying their role orientation as local or cosmopolitan.

Findings

Students in both groups tended to cluster toward the cosmopolitan end of the continuum of role identification. Fifty percent can be placed toward cosmopolitan identity, 16.7% toward local identity, and 33.3% were of mixed orientation. Furthermore, those students who were more advanced in their programs, as described with "finished coursework" or "am writing," more frequently responded toward a cosmopolitan orientation: all respondents who had finished coursework could be placed toward the cosmopolitan end of the continuum(n=3); of those students still in coursework (n=11), 40% were of cosmopolitan orientation.

Observations

The results of this study describe the role orientation of a group of student-practitioners representative of those in graduate programs in Higher Education Administration. Student-practitioners in community colleges experience a shift in role orientation from that of identity with the employing institution to that of a group outside the institution, in this case, the role of expert developed through the graduate school experience and through exposure to an outside group of professionals who are seeking to engender in students as sense of loyalty to a profession.

Implications

This study, part of a larger investigation of the socialization of graduate students, was restricted to two discrete groups of students. If this preliminary study is indicative of the latent role development of practitioner-students in graduate programs in Higher Education Administration, then these graduate programs are not necessarily preparing practitioners to return to positions of greater responsibility in the employing community college. Instead, these practitioners are being enculturated to seek institutions where their role orientation of expert can be reinforced and rewarded. This conclusion questions the wisdom of professional development through graduate study as a means to develop expertise for community college leadership. If these individuals are orientated toward values and norms outside the employing community college, they are unlikely to return to the college and assume a satisfactory role fit. The college may lose its investment in the individual

unless a new work role is anticipated, one which is commensurate with the new professional values and norms assumed by the student-practitioners. Otherwise, graduate study may lead to disorientation for these individuals with the issues of fit and loyalty left unresolved once the individual returns to full time employment in the community college.

If the student-practitioner leaves the community college after her/his professional leave, this constitutes a serious talent drain to the institution. This talent drain may be a price community colleges must pay for short term expertise in managing the institution. Perhaps faculty in graduate programs in Higher Education Administration should consider more active reinforcement of the student-practitioner orientation toward the employing institutions. Likewise, community colleges should carefully examine the type of graduate study planned during an individual's professional leave and should plan for role or congruity of position and professionization upon return from graduate study. The need for reflection on the purpose of education leave and the socialization process of graduate education by both colleges and graduate programs is in order.

Bibliography

Anderson, G. L. *Trends in Education for the Professions.* ERIC/Higher Education Report No. 7. Washington, DC: American Association for Higher Education, 1974.

Becker, H.S. and J.W.Carper. "The Elements of Identification with An Occupation." *American Sociological Review* 21(1956): 341-347.

Bland, W.D. "Role Orientation and Evaluation of Professional Performance." *Community College Review* 10 (Winter 1982-83): 27-32.

Comte, A. *Early Essays on Social Philosophy* (trans. H.D. Hutton) London: George Routhdge and Sons, n.d.

Corwin, R.G. "The Professional Employee: A Study of Conflicts in Nursing Roles." *American Journal of Sociology* 66 (May 1961):604-615.

Etzioni, A. *A Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations.* New York: The Free Press, 1961.

Goode, W. J. "Community Within a Community: The Professions." *American Sociological Review* 22 (April 1957): 194-200.

Gouldner, A. W. "Cosmopolitans and Locals: Toward an Analysis of Latent Social Roles --I. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 2 (December 1957): 281-306.

Gouldner, A. W. "Cosmopolitans and Locals: Toward an Analysis of Latent Social Roles--II. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 2 (March 1958): 444-480.

Grace, J.D. and J.D. Fife. "A Profile of Student Expectations of Graduate Programs in Higher Education: A Marketing Approach." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, San Antonio, February 1986. ED 268 883.

Gregory, K.L. "Native-view Paradigms: Multiple Cultures and Culture Conflicts in Organizations." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 28 (1983): 359-76.

Hosticka, C.J. "We Don't Care About What Happened, We Only Care About What is Going to Happen: Lawyer-client Negotiations of Reality." *Social Problems* 26 (1979): 599-610.

Kerlinger, F. N. *Foundations of Behavioral Research*, 2nd edition. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Wilson, 1964.

Ladd, E.C., Jr. and S.M. Lipset. "What Do Professors Like Best About Their Jobs?" *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (March 29, 1976): 6.

Ouchi, W.G. *Theory Z*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1981.

Pavalko, R. M. *Sociology of Occupations and Professions*. Itasca, IL: Peacock Publishers, 1971.

Reismann, L. "A Study of Role Conceptions in Bureaucracy." *Social Forces* 29 (1949): 365-370.

Rohlen, T.P. "Spiritual Education in a Japanese Bank. *American Anthropology* 75 (1973): 1564-62.

Schein, E. H. *Professional Education*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972.

Scott, W.R. "Professsions in Bureaucracies--Areas of Conflict." in Vollmer and Mills, 265-275.

Van Maanen, J. and E.H. Schein. "Toward a Theory of Organizational Socialization. In *Research in Organizational Behavior*, ed. B.M. Staw. Greenwich, CN: JAI, 209-264.

Vollmer, H. M. and D.L. Mills, eds. *Professionalization*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966.

Weber, M. *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1947.

Wilensky, H.L. "The Professionalization of Everyone?" *American Journal of Sociology* 70 (1964): 134-58.

Wilkins, A.L. *Organizational Stories as an Expression of Management Philosophy*. PhD thesis. Stanford University, Stanford, CA. 1979.

Wright, C.R. "Changes in the Occupational Commitment of Graduate Sociology Students: A Research Note." *Sociological Inquiry* 37 (Winter 1967): 55-62.